

SPANISH CASTLES ARE SHADOWED WITH SUFFERING

PROMETHEUS: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF LIMON: SUNDAY LIGHT. By Ramon Perez de Ayala. Prose Translations by Alice P. Hubbard. Poems Done in English by Grace Hazard Conkling. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Reviewed by MARGARET BURKE.

One of the press notices about this work declared: "Some will be scandalized by the author's capricious levity in dealing with the serious facts of life, others may be surprised by the absolute frankness on matters common to most of us; but the discerning will recognize that here is a new note, a master note, in the presentation of human life as it is to-day." Heaven help us if all who read are not discerning! It would have been better had they said those who do not dare to read this book. It is a lovely chain holding three perfect gems. These stories are inimitable, and as such they should be used only by the discerning and the truthful.

The press notice need not have been so apologetic; in fact, the tribute that it gives at its conclusion is hardly enough. It is more than a new note that has been struck—it is a whole symphony of gorgeous colorings and tones that only the old background of Spain could furnish.

In the first tale the pilgrimage of Odysseus is whimsically narrated as the foundation of the travels of a young Spaniard who suffered, lived and loved as did Odysseus. The poor youth plans his life as he chooses and makes out rather well with it. Later, however, his son, in whom he had hoped to take great pride, disappoints him by being hopelessly crippled and far too brilliant to be normal. Finally Mark, the father, gives up in despair. He covers his grief as best he can. Then Prometheus—for into the child the spirit of Prometheus has come—takes himself out of his parents' sight in timely suicide.

"The Fall of the House of Limon" is a pathetic story of the fall of an old and corrupt dynasty in Spain. The two old maids who bear the brunt of the tragedy are the most pitiful objects around whom the story weaves itself. The machinations of a political party, the murderous crimes of young senators and the last drop of payment exacted from the miserable women are painted in fierce colors by the author. There is no attempt to gloss over the truth. There is no backing from the point that ignominy and shame, no matter how clothed in purple or tatters, must be blotted out, even if it be to the wrecking of innocent lives. Ayala spares no one—even the woman who had hoped to find happiness pays for nothing save mere relationship. She pays in the worst form that a human can pay—in a lonely, miserable existence, tortured and hounded on every side.

"Sunday Sunlight" fulfills the hope that some of us have had that one would find some day a process of differentiation for the sunlight of the days of the week. For Monday's light is different from Tuesday's and so on down the length of the week. At last, Ayala has shown us that the sun has gone through the spectrum and falls on the brightest colors on Sunday.

In his story Sunday is the last happy day for Castor before he had wed Balbina. Hated by rivals in politics and love his fiancée is most cruelly violated by some young scion of the leading aristocratic family in Cenciella. After his marriage he finds that the people will not let Balbina forget her shame and he roams all over Spain with her in an effort to find a haven where disturbing gossip and revenge will not find them. In desperation he starts for South America. On board ship some immigrants recognize them and they are about to feel that nowhere in this world will they find the peace for which they seek. And nowhere on earth did they find it. A merciful Providence sent fire to the ship and the husband who so truly loved his wife perished with her in the ocean of eternal forgetfulness.

There is about these tales a passionate understanding of things human and divine. There is no shrouding of primal truths, but why should there be? What mystery there is in life will always exist whether or not we think we hide or expose it. No shabby coverings that any human frailty can invent for its own sense of prudery can add or detract from a mystery. These tales are for those who live and believe and who by living, lose none of that faith that holds for every man a spark of divine fire—a flame that makes the most awful endurable and the most divine—ecstatic.

Moonshiners and mystery

THE MAN IN THE DARK. By Albert Payson Terhune. E. P. Dutton & Co. Mr. Terhune has left out of this story none of the elements that go to make up a wide popular success—love, intrigue, mystery, good dramatic situations, a clear, direct narrative and a properly happy ending. He is a skillful literary packer; he has gotten everything in, neatly arranged in its right place. It makes a very acceptable tale, and it is a "clean" story, which is more than can be said of a good deal of the current output of fiction.

It is staged in the mountains of West Virginia, among moonshiners, night riders, "hill-billies" and a truly rural community. Perhaps his hero, the misanthropic hill man who has been seared by ill fortune but is renovated by the heroine, is a bit stogy, and the girl herself something of a conventional figure, but the other persons are very well done. Of course the dog is the best of the lot; authentically doggy, no disguised humanized animal on four legs, but a real thoroughbred. Nor is he overdone at all. Mr. Terhune is our best literary dog-man; here his work is soundly artistic. The story abounds in hair-breadth and half-raising escapes, and has some very good fights and mob scenes. It holds one's interest throughout.



Two wilful young women

COQUETTE. By Frank Swinnerton. George H. Doran Company. THE EDUCATION OF ERIC LANE. By Stephen McKenna. George H. Doran Company.

AT the same time appear new novels by authors of some note in which the chief characters are women, born into opposite social spheres, but with some traits in common. Each is determined to work things out for herself. A wilful individuality is the keynote. But each is hindered in her progress by a traitorous tenderness. In both cases the girl is put forth as though the severe author counted on the world's condemnation.



Frank Swinnerton.

And the reader finds himself sympathizing with her and cursing her hard hearted creator—which very likely is part of the said creator's plan.

In Swinnerton's heroine there is more than a suggestion of Becky Sharp. There is Becky's intelligence, energy and determination to get on. Sally Minto decides what she is worth and plans to get the best results from her personal stock. She shows initiative in leaving her position and getting a better one in a dressmaking establishment. This is her characteristic reaction to the new environment: "The other girls were all sorted out in Sally's mind. There was not one of them into whose nature she had not some bling insight. She had become so practical that she knew all their dresses and knew what everything they owned had cost. She could recognize anything that had been dyed,

Trifles touched with humor

TALES FROM A ROLLTOP DESK. By Christopher Morley. Doubleday, Page & Co.

Reviewed by XAVIER LYNDON.

IN four of the stories that make up this collection, "The Pert Little Hat," "Ern Burial," "The Climacteric" and "Punch and Judy," Morley says nothing charmingly. These tales furnish ample proof that a man who has the literary touch can be entertaining even when his theme is trifling. Deft bits of characterization, bright snatches of dialogue and an occasional neatly turned phrase make one forget the wateriness of the plots. Certainly at no point in the reading of this quartet will the reader remark, "The plot thickens." Yet these four yarns hold the interest.

The slightest of them, "The Climacteric," is merely an episode. It has to do with Eustace Veal. On his way to the office one day some one said of him: "There goes Veal! He's beginning to look old, isn't he?" This has the effect of making Mr. Veal try to look young. His efforts are unsuccessful. People continue to refer to him as an aging man. That is the whole story; and yet Mr. Morley tells it so adroitly that it holds the interest and makes one chuckle. This is art; not the highest form, perhaps, yet art nevertheless. There are strokes that remind one of Henry Cuyler Bunner.

If the other seven stories in the collection were as charmingly inconsequential, "Tales from a Rolltop Desk" would be a fine book. Unfortunately, this group is simply inconsequential. In one of them, "Referred to the Author," he tries to make drama out of the story of a soulful actor who is persecuted by the typical low-brow stage director of fiction. The feeling you get as you read this tale is that the actor would do well to go out and buy himself a sense of humor. The persecution seems unreal. When the actor cannot stand it any longer (incidentally at this point, neither can the reader), he cracks his oppressor's skull and in the process gets killed himself. We would have liked the story better if the stage director had killed the actor and smoked a cigar over his dead body. An experienced actor who hasn't a sense of humor belongs in the other world, anyhow; certainly a man of this type can have more fun playing a harp than a part. The ignorant brute of a stage director might never have done any good staging, but he could have done some useful work in this life; for instance, think of all the people he could have kidded out of

any brooch or adornment, any stockings. She would have made a good house detective. But she told no tales. If she knew, she knew, and that was all. Sally was Sally. She enjoyed being Sally. She meant always to be Sally.

But the author has laid the foundation of trouble for her by giving her a heart and losing it for her before worldly ambition has had a fair chance. It is a very elementary kind of love that she feels for Toby. But it serves the purpose of the drama. The story shall not be told here. Swinnerton tells it very well.

In the valuation of a book the name should not count for very much. But this one seems decidedly misleading. For the implications of "Coquette" are not carried out. Sally cares too much for Toby to play with him as a true coquette plays with men. And there is a good deal of kindness mixed with her calculation in the case of Gaga.

All this is praise, not blame, for the temptation would be to make such a character too hard—a villainess only the world of stock fiction. Sally is human, and her evocation is an achievement. But she is very imperfectly and incompletely a coquette.

Stephen McKenna has for some years been a progressive disappointment. Readers of "Sonia" (not "Sonia Married") have been watching for signs of growth from that excellent beginning. But the hoped for brightening and deepening in McKenna's work has not come. He writes good stories and one reads on to the end. But the details of the social round are too important. Perhaps it shouldn't be urged against the author that one is continually wanting to slap his hero, for some people always make one feel that way.

Poor little Barbara has a hard time any way you look at it. Here is an example of her ways:

She asked him for his cigarette. "Before he could see what she was doing the glowing end had been pressed against her hand until it blackened and died. He saw her eyes shut and her lip whitening as she bit it. Her body swayed and fell forward before the crumpled cigarette dropped on to the carpet.

"You little—Babs, what's the matter with you?"

"She opened her eyes, breathing quickly and holding out her hand to show a vermillion ring with a leprous white centre.

"I'd put my hand in the fire for you," she panted.

"You little fool!" He was filled with a desire to hurt her for having hurt herself. "Look here, Barbara..."

"But she had risen to her feet and was pressing the wounded hand to her lips.

"You don't know how it hurt!" she cried with a tremble in her voice."

taking themselves too seriously. Mr. Morley should have made a comedy, not a tragedy, out of the circumstances he uses in this yarn; then he would have had another amusing trifler.

Mr. Morley could afford to discard such words as "febrile," "egocentric," "froyst," "complaud." They remind one of Fannie Hurst at her worst.

The book is full of puns, many of them excellent. Of them one is perfect. It has to do with a Broadway producer who advertises "A Chorus that outstrips them all." This ranks with F. P. A.'s comment on the May Day bomb attack on A. Mitchell Palmer's residence. "The bomb's month of May"; Keith Preston's comment on the royalties of a well known novelist, "I'd rather be Wright than President," and other classic puns. The only criticism we have to make of Mr. Morley as a punster is that at times he is too apologetic about it, as when in "Referred to the Author" he has a character say: "Pardon the vile pun," and at other times, needlessly explanatory, as when in "Punch and Judy" he observes: "Pursuing the train of his previous pun." Either pun or pun at all, say we.

Too careful of her mother

THE GUARDED ROOM. By G. I. Whitman. John Lane Company.

THE theme of this very English novel is rather worth while and unhackneyed, though it is somewhat clumsily handled. It is the futility and possible evil of over-anxious self-sacrifice, the desire to "spare" others and to take up burdens that are perhaps better borne by those to whom they belong. It also involves the contrast in ideals between the late Victorian and the up to date young women and their men.

The contents of the "guarded room" were an invalid mother and her devoted daughter, the mother afflicted with "heart trouble" and needing to be spared any excitement or responsibility. The daughter fades out and dies, and all the time the mother is yearning to get out, and probably quite capable of doing so. The family is of the old English gentry type, rather hard up and finding it difficult to fit into new conditions. They are also afflicted with an eccentric member, the eldest son, who turns reclusive, abandons his disagreeable wife and makes a mess of things. Of course it ends cheerfully enough after a few deaths. As a psychological study it is suggestive, as a story it drags.

He was his own worst enemy

EVERED. By Ben Ames Williams. E. P. Dutton & Co.

HIS latest story is typical of its author in that it produces an effect of somber and sanguinary strength. Mr. Williams likes a fight and describes it with soberness and zest, even when the weapons are all on one side.

In this book he has given us an excellent story, not long, but impressive, and this time the setting is not, as in "All the Brothers Were Valiant" and "The Sea Bride," the ocean but the land. It is against the background of a peaceful little country village in New England that the action proceeds with that steady advance toward tragedy which is to be expected when "silent tremendous forces" are in conflict.

Evered himself is the exponent of these forces, and in picturing him we venture to think that the author has created a character who is psychologically abnormal if not impossible. He is a prosperous farmer and a fiend incarnate—hot tempered, fierce, relentless, dominating, he goes through life hating and hated. Somewhat inadequately he is termed "a boiling vessel of emotions." In an early chapter when he is driving home from the post office with his son John, who understood him best of all, we are allowed this glimpse of his character:

"They drove home together through the dusk in a silence that was habitual. Evered sat still in his seat, but there was no relaxation in his attitude. He was like a tiger before the charge and leap. You might call him a powerful man, a masterful man. John knew his father for a slave, for the slave of his own hot and angry pulse beats. And he loved and pitied him."

Not a gentle father, surely. Still less a gentle husband, yet married to a woman whose devotion is remarkable under the circumstances, and whom he loved, we are assured, with unyielding tenacity and fervor. His method of expressing this, however, was indefensible and extraordinary, for "he made her suffer interminably until suffering became routine and death would have been happiness."

"She was like a statue of sorrow," the figure of a sad and tortured life."

This is the incredible claim of the story—that despite deep and passionate affection on each side Evered should have been consistently brutal, unkind and cruel to Mary, who could not have provoked these qualities herself. He can only be compared to his own bull, about which the story centres.

This bull was the deadliest of its species—famous the countryside around for its ferocity and immensity. When Evered sees his wife one day accompanied by a man whose futile adoration for her she does not in the least reciprocate, Evered calmly allows the beast to kill her. For at the moment he was "a concentrated fury, absorbed and oblivious" of the fact that no sinister significance could possibly be attached to the episode.

There is a gleam of light in this rather harrowing tale in John Evered's romance with his stepmother's young sister, Ruth, even though after the disaster they become estranged temporarily because of Ruth's sudden fear that he will grow like his father. Fortunately there is no basis, as she soon discovers, for such an idea and they are left to face a belated happiness, which the reader feels they will deserve.

SHADOWS. By Alma Newton. John Lane Company.

Reviewed by VIVIAN RADCLIFFE.

THIS book, composed of a series of short essays, may be counted among the most delightful pieces of literature lately offered readers who enjoy the record of impressions; and it will doubtless win some who have not realized the charm of the intangible.

There is a similarity in the women of some of these sketches, which at times almost leads the reader to believe the suggestion for them was found in a common source. For example, in "The Moon and the Water Spirits," she was placid and sweet by nature, but the tuning of her soul or herself to a higher key had made her irritable when she was surrounded by noise and people, which are sometimes one and the same.

And in "The Astral Courtship"—On the objective plane she was both silent and modest; thereby she awakened interest in the man she loved. But on the astral plane she was not negative, she was active, she was the seeker, the lover, the one who planned.

And of one man's conception of women and the one woman he writes in Paradise—"He had felt that he was destined to wait for some one, some one symmetrically developed, some one who delighted the eye, inspired the mind and awakened the soul. And now she had come! Quite silently she had walked into his life, without warning. He looked up and she was there. It was as though a door had closed out all the darkness, a door that shut out worldliness, ugliness and vain women who talked! Why did women talk? he wondered. Why did they desecrate the silence and distort the full beauty of a moment with words? The women he had known had done this. They felt called upon to express their love in words or by an affected sigh or look, something objective it had been, always, for they had never forgotten themselves even for a moment; therefore they had neither given nor received

Old and new style heroines

THE ISLAND OF DESIRE. By Diana Patrick. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Reviewed by SUSAN STEELL.

AN amusing figure that would not be out of place in Dickens's broadest farce or George Eliot's Warwickshire dramatics personae is the auctioneer, Hellingwell, who talks breathlessly and quotes incorrectly in the most readable parts of Diana Patrick's new novel. He and his "cushiony" wife are only side-lights, it is true, but their lights are not borrowed from the other more important personages (in the author's opinion) who make the good and evil of the story.

There is plenty of both, for the writer is as lavish of events, scenes and colors as Ouida, whom she good naturedly despises; Rose, who plucked up spirit to defy her chaperoning father; Caradoc, the man she married in spite of himself and her; all the dismal troop of characters surrounding these chief persons in a still more dismal manufacturing place in England; then the gayer crowd who cluster about Rose and her husband in their honeymooning at Nice, in Provence and Brittany (interesting parts of the world, vividly pictured); there is scarcely a type of Frenchman or Englishman that Miss Patrick has not effectively studied, and she works them quite congruously into her loosely woven scheme.

That sentence fairly summarizes Part I. of this book, where Rose is the heroine and it closes with her death. She leaves two children, Pearl, whose father was the erratic Caradoc, and Vivien, who came from her union with a wandering musician of fine character, a union that her stern, chaperoning father stigmatized as unlawful. Because of this distinction he devised his property—grown vast after a case of arson engineered by himself—to his legitimate grandchildren.

In Part II. the story reaches down into war times, and between them Pearl and Vivien divide the honors due to a leading lady. Pearl, who has been brought up "in luxury," but in bad taste to judge by the clothes she is described as wearing, develops the vampire type, while Vivien, early left an orphan without patrimony, flowers into all that is sweet and good. She knows of her relationship to the granddaughter of the millionaire mill owner Blinn, but conceals it while seeking to form ties of friendship with her half sister. Unhappily for them both, Vivien has engaged herself to a young Londoner who reads very like a cad, and Pearl's chief interest in Vivien is expressed by cutting her out of a lover. Pearl, indeed, is remarkable in this friendly, old-fashioned book for her modernity; she is a true vampire of the day.

The experienced novel reader quickly realizes that Vivien's love affair doesn't touch the quick, and in the success of Pearl's plots nobody suffers; certainly not Vivien, for there is at her elbow another, a celebrated novelist, who, *incognito*, has guided the first steps of this young, aspiring author up to the difficult peaks of literature. On the eve of publication information of the date of the death of Caradoc comes in time to dispel the cloud of illegitimacy on Vivien—but alas! by darkening the title of Pearl. But the latter is by this time married, and the reader cares little for her anyway. In the last pages it is her

dainty and talented sister who rightfully inherits from the mother Rose. Sparkling in spots, alternately lively and slow in its progress, this novel, which combines a kind of ancient charm with some modern features which are not disagreeable, seems likely to be picked up and dropped out of a good many hammocks this summer, but probably to be picked up again until the last page has been read.

Three bad men in New Mexico



Eugene Manlove Rhodes.

STEPSONS OF LIGHT. By Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Houghton, Mifflin Company.

AGAIN and again we see reproduced in the contemporary novel the same Western atmosphere—a vast expanse of desolate country, a group of cowboys of the "rough and ready" type, a liberal sprinkling of guns, some underhanded maneuvering and an unpolished Sir Galahad who bears the colors to victory at the final page. At times the scene may be the mountains, at times the desert; at times the motivating impulse may be a woman, at times the lure of gold; but in general the characters are the same, the action is the same and the plot is built along the same lines; and we might almost take up any one of the novels as the logical sequel to any other.

"Stepsons of Light" is a book that does not vary greatly from type. Among the mountainous wastes of New Mexico dwells Johnnie Dines, a hero, at once clever, resourceful and chivalrous; by chance he becomes the butt of three murderers, who endeavor to fasten upon him the responsibility for their crimes; and the story is largely concerned with how he succeeds in disentangling himself from the net they have fastened about him and in delivering them instead up to justice. The plot, however, is far from well organized; many foreign elements are introduced, with no apparent object other than to fill up space; we see the ghost of a love story, in which Johnnie Dines has no part; and a number of shadowy and non-essential characters move vaguely before us, tending to cast into the background the definite picture we get of the central figure.

Fortunately, the book is relieved by some qualities lacking in many Western novels. Prominent among these is its humor, which stares at us whimsically on repeated occasions; and no less noteworthy is a spirit of meditativeness manifesting itself when Mr. Rhodes forgets temporarily that he has a story to tell and regales us with ruminations in many respects more interesting than his narrative. In particular, he has some amusing comments to make on realism and on pessimism. One passage will illustrate—and, by the way, one cannot help expressing the wish that the author had done more in this vein:

"Only of late has it been discovered that a thinker is superficial and shallow unless he whines; that no man is wise unless he whines with alarm. Eager propaganda has disseminated the glad news that everything is going to the demitition bowwows. Willing hands pass on the word. The method is simple. They write very long books in which they set down the evil on one side—and nothing on the other. That is realism."

After the civil war

THE FIRE BRINGERS. By Francis Lynde. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE old South resented the economic invasion of the over-efficient Yankee more than the defeat on the field of battle. In "The Fire Bringers" Mr. Lynde partly explains why. The future of a sleepy

little Southern town depended almost wholly upon the development of water power through a dam. One of the leading citizens had prevailed upon many friends to invest money in the project, and its failure meant ruin for him, as he would have sold his ancestral estates to foot the loss of his followers. An accident to a disabled motor boat upon the tempestuous river threw the son of the man who was trying to ruin his dreams into his hospitable hands.

The story tells how the youth, who had been an incorrigible idler, changed completely his viewpoint and defeated the schemes of his father's corporation, winning thereby the heart and hand of the fair daughter of his gallant host.

NEW BOOKS

Fiction.

ROGUES & COMPANY—By Ida A. R. Wylie. John Lane.

THE DEATH OF SOCIETY—By Homer Wilson. Putnam.

FORESHADOWED—By F. E. Mills Young. Doran.

THE WALL—By John Courmes. Doran.

BUFF: A COLLIE AND OTHER DOG STORIES—By Albert Payson Terhune. Doran.

Drama.

SWEET AND TWENTY: a Comedy in One Act—By Floyd Dell. Stewart Kidd.

CHRISTOPHER—By Lionel Joseph. Published by the author, 129 Grand avenue, Oakland, Cal.

Travel.

HAIL COLUMBIA!—Random Impressions of a Conservative English Radical—By W. L. George. Harpers.

JAPANESE IMPRESSIONS: WITH A NOTE ON CONFUCIUS—Translated from the French of Paul-Louis Couchoud by Frances Runney, with a preface by Anatole France. John Lane.

WATCHING ON THE RHINE—By Violet R. Markham. Doran.

History and Public Affairs.

CURRENCY AND EMPLOYMENT: DEFLATION OF THE CURRENCY—A Reply to the Anti-Deflationists—By Sir Lancelot Hale. London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd.

THE PEACE OF JUSTICE—By Raphael-Georges Levy, with a preface by Raymond Poincaré. Doran.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE REFORM IN ENGLAND FROM 1832 TO 1918—By Homer Lawrence Morris. New York: Columbia University.

Social Science.

THE BOLSHEVISM OF SEX: FEMININITY AND FEMINISM—By Ferdinand J. J. Merckx. New York: Higher Thought Publishing Company.

Miscellaneous.

RHYTHM, MUSIC AND EDUCATION—By Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. Translated from the French by Harold F. Rubinstein. Putnam.

"SOME" WOMEN—By One of Them. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.

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